

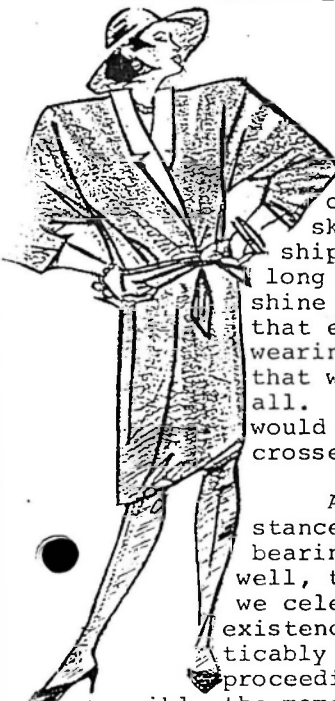
NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Ottawa, Canada

Summer 1989

No. 3

Summertime, Anniversaries and Other Sundry Matters



Summertime! Despite all the pleasures of BBQ's, outdoor cafés and crisp, white skirts, there is hardship also. After all, long days of bright sunshine often reveal clearly that either that woman is wearing too much makeup or that woman is no woman at all. Oh well, as my mother would say, "We all have our crosses to bear."

And under the circumstances, I think we are bearing our crosses quite well, thank you. On May 6th we celebrated one year of existence. There was a noticeably festive air to the proceedings and this was made tangible the moment one peeked in the refrigerator. Besides an unusually large supply of beer, there was champagne and the makings of what turned out to be a delicious buffet dinner. We even had door prizes (although these were not to be found in the fridge). I would like to say that everyone was wearing their best, but that would simply be stating the obvious since we're always wearing our best.

The success of our anniversary celebration was all the more gratifying coming as it did on the heels of a setback. We had planned on going to a restaurant for the occasion but could not muster up the 20 or so people necessary for this to become a reality. This was mildly discouraging but I don't think anyone doubts it will happen in time. Still, an

average cross dresser goes through so many years of bitter frustration, can he be blamed if he wants it all now?

At the first meeting of our second year, we finally got around to some business by setting dues at 5\$ per meeting - an entertainment tax if you will; although true to our fashion we agreed that if this fee was prohibitive for some we would make some sort of alternate arrangements. We're a bit soft on rules. In any case, you're perhaps waiting for our justification for taking your money (deficit! deficit! deficit!) so here goes: mailing costs, P.O. Box rentals, advertising and occasional buffets. Lucky for you
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Notes from the Underground
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"Achievement of any kind would be impossible for him unless he was free from those who would be forever dragging him back into the conventional. The conventional had been tried already and had been found wanting."

Samuel Butler
The Way of All Flesh

A Life Part 1

TRANS SCRIPTS

was accepted...well,
tolerated anyway.

Jim

P.S. If this passes Ted's
critical eye, I just
might be persuaded to

This is the city;
there are 8 thousand
stories in the city;
this is one of them....

I came into this world like any-
one, a gleam in my father's eye, a
sigh in my mother's throat, and a
doctor who wanted to play golf.

I spent a childhood that was
fairly typical, in some ways not so
typical for the 1950's. I hated
sports, rowdy activities and itchy
socks. I loved to read from an early
age; I liked to swim and ride my bike.
By the time I was about 10, I noticed
that women wore much nicer clothes
than men. I especially liked the
satiny fabrics that for some reason
men weren't allowed to wear. I liked
the look of skirts as well, but it
didn't connect to my self until....

A few years later:

"How do you like my new dress?"
said my mom. I was lying on the
couch spacing on the tube, I saw the
dress and I knew I liked it very much.

Since then I have gone through
the typical angst and the "why me's"
of this kind of life: guilt tripping,
throwing away clothes, generally feel-
ing like a stranger in a strange land,
a fish out of water.

Until I was about 26 or so. At
that time, I got entirely fed up with
it, and decided if I can't beat it,
then I'll live with it. I told a
friend about it in his cab at about 5
in the morning, screwing up my cour-
age, and his response was "oh, a
transvestite, a guy who likes to wear
women's clothes?" He was so casual
about it, all I could say was, "ya,
right." Shortly after that I came
out with it to everybody at a party.
To make a long story short, I didn't
get punched in the nose; in fact, I

continue the story.

(I can't wait! Ted)

X Dressing

I can't understand what all the
fuss is about cross dressing. Crosses
have appeared naked in most instances
throughout history. So what's wrong
with dressing them up a little?

Sometimes I'm asked over the
phone if I'm dressed up. Usually I'll
say "No, I'm just wearing a skirt and
blouse". If I was dressed up, I'd be
wearing an elegant evening gown or a
nice blouse, jacket and skirt. It
also seems strange to me when I tell
someone I'm going out somewhere and
they ask me if I'm going dressed. Be-
ing kind of shy, I most always wear
clothes if I go out.

Do I like TV's? Well, I prefer
coloured ones to black and white, but
quite often the colour of a TV doesn't
matter that much. One has to make do
with what one has. I just have a lit-
tle portable one myself.

Some people ask me if I'm a trans-
vestite, and I can honestly say I only
feel like one when I'm forced to wear a
suit and tie, or anything male for that
matter.

A common question I'm often asked
is "How well do you pass?". I'd say
I pass quite well on the male clothes
that society expects me to wear, and
often I'll pass after having been
dealt a particularly bad hand during
a game of euchre. If I'm at the din-
ner table, I'll usually pass anything
if I'm politely asked. I was never

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Considering Our Options

All too often the desire among our kind is that we wish we could be allowed to freely be ourselves and acquire acceptance among the general population. A frequent lament and a very valid desire I'm sure we have all heard many times. As for myself, I couldn't agree more strongly with the statement. Having agreed, we now face two choices. One is that we continue to express our opinions and ourselves in the relative safety of our homes, and the other is that we attempt to inform others outside of our culture.

I must admit that I am not the most courageous person in the world so don't think I'm just out to criticize others, since all of the criticism must also be directed towards myself. But is not the only way that we can hope to gain our rights, that we venture out into the real world and make our presence gradually more visible?

I can remember as a child living in a small town years ago when one day the first black family moved in. Of course this was after all the segregation of blacks and whites in the U.S. had ended and had been mostly resolved, but still there was some hostility generated towards this one family. But as people met the family, and children got to know this unique new kid on the block, we all soon learned that aside from their different colour, they were in fact just as kind, friendly and nice as those who had white skin under their clothes.

Had the women of days gone by only talked of emancipation among themselves and never made a stand publicly, they too would still perhaps be the property of men, and



the slaves of the household.

I relish the day when I'll get on the bus and while reading the various ads and public announcements, I'll come across a poster discussing cross dressing. Maybe one day I'll see a stack of brochures in my doctor's office which state that yes, it's all right for one to be such as myself. I'm sure we're several years, if ever, from public awareness to even this degree.

Well, I'm not suggesting we march on Parliament Hill, go on strike for freedom of dress or burn our male underwear (I'd sure like to burn my male suits), but maybe we should consider our options. Those who desire to express their feminine selves publicly may find some comfort by realizing that many have trodden these same steps; but comfort can be felt also when one considers that their little venture is one small step for all the others like us in

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(from page 1)

we've found a corporate sponsor for our newsletter.

On the subject of advertising, our classified ad in the Ottawa Citizen got only a moderate response, although I think in the end it will have served its purpose. I suspect more people noticed it than answered it, and we have still a number of trails to follow because of it.

There was one other item of business at our first meeting of

year two, and that concerned a recurring disagreement over the name of our organization. There are some (myself included, I must admit) who don't particularly like the name, and feel it doesn't reflect who we are. The trouble is we are all wary of the usual labels and the stereotypes they suggest, and thus cannot agree on a new name. Consequently, changing our name now appears, in degree of difficulty, to be comparable to amending the country's constitution. So, New Ottawa Women we are.

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the world. Just some food for thought. And remember, if you do go out realize that you are representing all of us, so be tasteful, pleasant and act like you belong there. Familiarity may breed contempt, but familiarity most often leads to understanding.

Sharon

(from page 2)

very good at passing a football because my high heels usually sank into the field and I just found it too difficult to run in a skirt.

A concern many of us have is being read. I'll admit I do get red sometimes from either wearing too much blush, or from having spent too much time in the sun. However, if I'm careful and take the proper precautions, I don't get red too often.

It sure is a confusing world and I'm still trying to make sense of it all, but I just can't understand what all the fuss is about.

Sharon
(Some people do get cross about our dressing, don't they? Ted)

Femme a La Mode

Ingredients :

1 Foundation	1 Eyeliner Pencil	1 Skirt
1 Coverstick	1 Mascara	1 Blouse
1 Translucent Powder	1 Blush	1 Femphile
3 Eyeshadows		

Directions :

Spread coverstick and foundation evenly over face. Let stand for ten minutes. Sprinkle lightly with powder. Delicately mix eyeliner and mascara. Using spatula, add eyeshadows. Blush as desired. Gently enclose femphile in blouse and skirt. Accessorize and add jewellery to taste. Appetize with perfume as desired. Let stand until desired consistency.

Ideal with ord'heurves and caviar. Great for small get togethers, large parties or after a hectic day. Serves one.

Sharon

THE MAN IN THE GLASS

When you get what you want in your struggle for self, and the world makes you king for a day, Just go to a mirror and look at yourself, and see what That Man has to say.

For it isn't your father or mother or wife whose judgement upon you must pass. The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life is the one staring back from the glass.

Some people may think you a straight-shooting chum, and call you a wonderful guy, but the man in the glass says you're only a bum, if you can't look him straight in the eye.

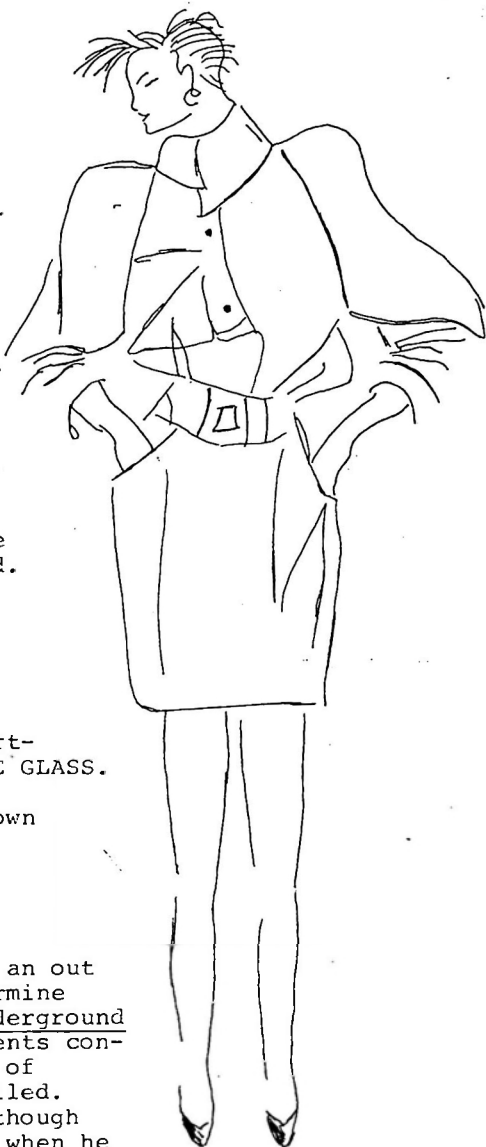
He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest, for he's with you clear to the end. And you have passed your most difficult, dangerous test, if the man in the glass is your friend.

You can fool the whole world down the pathway of life, and get pats on your back as you pass, but your final reward will be heart-aches and tears, if you cheat the MAN IN THE GLASS.

Author unknown

This Is A Test

I have purposely tucked this notice in an out of the way corner of the newsletter to determine just how many people read Notes from the Underground from cover to cover. If all our correspondents continue to write us using our old postal code of KIK 8E4, then I'll know I, and you, have failed. Our postal code is - and always has been although the clerk at the Post Office didn't know it when he rented me our box - our code, I say, is KIL 8E4. Please don't let me down.



THE BACK PAGE

Authorities in Iran have warned women that they may be punished by up to 74 lashes if they wear lipstick and eyeshadow in a provocative manner, and wear see-through stockings. I wonder what the penalty is for the men.



Two obituaries of note in the last month: Sex change pioneer Christine Jorgensen died of cancer at 62. George Jorgensen, then a 24 year old photographer, had an operation in 1952 that changed him into what the newspaper reports termed a "willow blonde". And Karen Ulane, a decorated Vietnam combat pilot who was fired from Eastern Airlines after a sex change operation in 1980, died in the crash of a DC-3 charter plane. She was 48. Ulane took Eastern to court and won a settlement which was overturned by an appellate court. She eventually received a settlement from Eastern.



A Canadian Press story in May told of the work of photographer John Simone, a Torontonian who takes picture of New York's "Fabulous Nobodies". These are the people among New York's nightclubs who someone has deemed interesting. Apparently the surest way to achieve hipness is for a male to start dressing as a woman, become a woman or half a woman. Well, I must admit I like the criteria. Fabulous nobodies. And you thought you were just a lonely, frustrated transvestite.

In India there are members of a "third sex" who make their living by singing at homes of newborn babies or newlyweds. They are the hinjaras - eunuchs, transsexuals, hermaphrodites and transvestites and they occupy one of the lowest rungs of Indian society. Children born with inadequately formed genitals or who lack clearly defined masculine or feminine characteristics are often turned out of their homes by embarrassed parents and forced to join the hinjaras. The latter welcome them because they believe that God has created hermaphrodites in his own androgynous image. Zenanas or transvestites form the lowest rung of hinjaras. Since they are also considered outcasts by Indian society, the zenanas join hinjaras, where they are welcomed, provided they undergo castration. On the 40th day after the castration, the zenanas are clothed in female attire, decked with jewelry and presented to the guru, a self-castrated hinjara who rules the group. Concentrations of hinjaras are found in big cities, but they are evenly spread throughout the country.



And, to top off your day, the New York Times recently announced that women are back in men's clothing. "Bigger clothes are more comfortable," the story said. (Yes, but feminine clothes are more sensual, I said.) The outerwear is "more rugged than what you find in women's departments". (Yes, but the prettier outerwear is still in the women's department, I answered.) Two ways of looking at it, but for some reason our way is not valid.

All items compiled by Ted. See you in the fall.